



Winter 1993

The Ames Intelligencer

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Member of American Association for Local & State History

A SPECIAL EVENT WITH DAN HUNTER

Annual Meeting

Monday, March 22, 7 p.m.

Ames Public Library Auditorium

Admission \$1.00

On March 22, 1993, Dan Hunter will present a preview of the Postcard Project for the Ames Heritage Association. This will be the first time the project has been presented in a public setting. The Postcard Project is an innovative combination of historical documents and new music. This special preview will consist of short musical excerpts, slide demonstration and discussion of Iowa history as seen through postcards. This will include postcards of the Ames area.

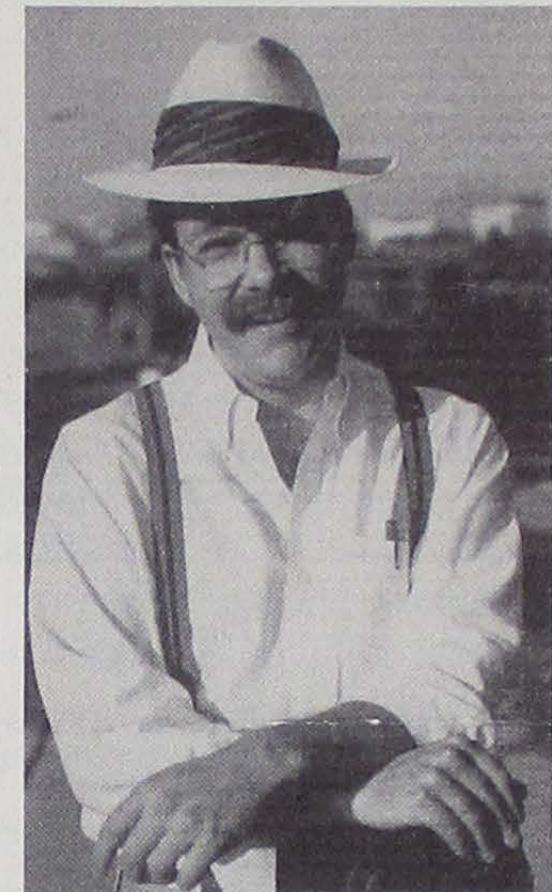
When completed, the postcard project will be a concert-length song cycle for four voices and piano with photograph slide accompaniment. The song text and visual images are taken from Midwestern postcards from the penny postcard era, 1906-1910. The postcard images and random text are set to music to explore

how the modest activities of daily life 80 years ago accumulate into the forces that create our culture today.

Dan Hunter is an Iowa songwriter and entertainer. He is also the author of two books of humor: *The Search for Iowa (& We Don't Grow Potatoes)* and *Let's Keep Des Moines a Private Joke*. He has written two plays, including a short radio play broadcast on public radio across the nation and "Good for Nothing" a two act comedy about life in small town Iowa.

The Postcard Project is supported in part by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The annual meeting will also include a short business meeting to elect new board members for the upcoming year. A summary of the Association's activities for 1992



Dan Hunter, Iowa humorist, writer, and singer will present the program at the Association's annual meeting on March 22.

will be presented as well as a financial report for the past year. Past board members will be honored with a certificate of appreciation. For more information about the annual meeting call president, Kathy Svec at 232-4877.

Reserve May 8

The Town and Country (Saturday morning) Kiwanis and the Heritage Association will co-host a festive day on May 8 to honor one-room school teachers and to reminisce about the one-room school experience. Although still in the planning stages, the program will be open to the public and will be held at Meeker School.

A program/discussion will be accompanied by historical displays and tours of Hoggatt School, Ames' first school now in place on Meeker School grounds. The Hoggatt School was moved to its present location and restored by the Ames Heritage Association in 1980.

Calendars

A limited number of 1993 historical calendars are available for purchase from the Ames Heritage Association. The calendars at \$5 each contain 12 collectible historic photos from the Farwell Brown Collection. To order, send \$5 with your name and address to AHA, Box 821, Ames, IA 50010.

"Municipal Ames Making Wonderful Strides"

by Sharon Wirth

The above headline proudly announced a special edition of the *Ames Evening Times*, "Souvenir and Industrial Feature Edition" (Feb., 1916). This edition, in celebrating the recent progress of Ames declared, "this will mark one of the most important epochs in the history of Ames, in the matter of public improvements." City officials at the time were Parley Sheldon, mayor; H. B. Corlett and L. B. Spinney, councilmen-at-large; Waldo Sturtz, first ward councilman; T. L. Rice, second ward; James Gilchrist, third ward; Charles Murray, fourth ward; A. B. Maxwell, city clerk; J. Q. Wickham, city engineer; and Charles E. Warsaw, superintendent of city electric light plant and waterworks system.

It was during this time period that the Ames community moved from a pioneer village to a community with public improvements the envy of many cities in the mid-West. Ames' population of 5091 was

prospering and the foresight of its leaders and their willingness to invest in new technology resulted in the change to a "modern city." During this time period many parts of Ames began to take on the physical characteristics that we are so familiar with today. This included street paving, sidewalk improvements, sanitary sewer extension, and a new light plant, as well as, the new city hall building, the new hospital and other commercial buildings which dominate Ames' commercial architecture.

Early sidewalks were constructed of wood planks, but by 1891, wood sidewalks were outlawed on Main Street (Onondaga). City specifications called for concrete on an eighteen inch bed of gravel. Approximately eight miles of streets were paved with asphalt in 1916. This material, having proved successful in other communities, was sure to be a major improvement over the 1911 paving with creosote-dipped wood blocks which buckled when too wet and oozed tar when the sun was shining. Imagine the problems created with the ladies long dresses worn at this time!

Expansion of the sewage system was pushed by the plans to pave streets. Sewer mains were extended in many areas during this time period just before streets were paved and curb and gutter installed. To provide electricity for the growing community major improvements were made to the city-owned light plant. In 1915 a \$32,000 addition was made after several years of discussions about changing the plant's location.

Reading the special 1916 edition of the *Ames Evening Times*, one feels a strong sense of excitement was present throughout the community from businesses to city government to (then) Iowa State College to individual citizens. New construction was literally everywhere. It was as though Ames could not build or grow fast enough. The

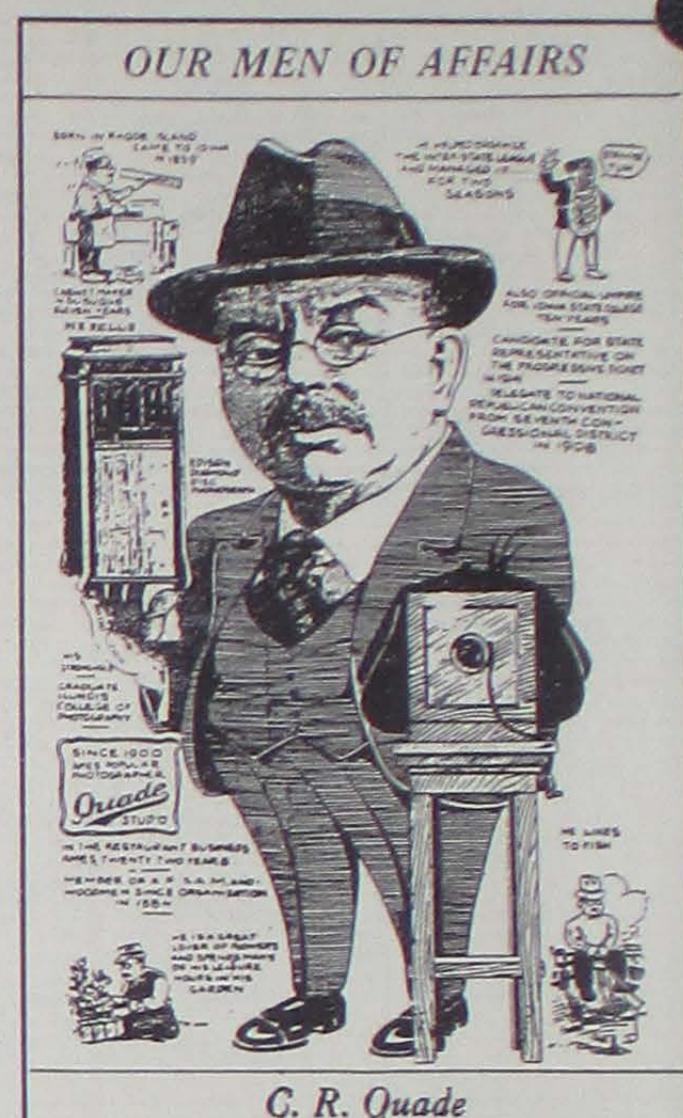
OUR MEN OF AFFAIRS



M. J. Adams

This caricature, one from a series featuring businessmen of the time, was run in the Ames Evening Times during 1917 and 1918. Original newspaper clippings were donated by Ames resident Con Wendell.

OUR MEN OF AFFAIRS



C. R. Quade

C. R. Quade was a man of many talents. He was well-known for his photography. Up to 1916, he had done all the photography (except for 1909) for the *ISU Bomb*, the college annual.

writers suggest no other city in Iowa had enjoyed such rapid and healthy growth during these last few years. Further, they say, "at the present time real estate is changing hands almost as fast as the Almighty Dollar," (section 2, page 6). A large number of new residences were constructed during 1915 and an even larger number were expected during 1916. Additionally there was talk of new buildings at the college, new business blocks and industrial expansions. In section 3, page 2, they write, "The home is a safe investment—a good place to put savings, and it pays a large return. Real estate is of course one of the safest of investments and improved real estate pays its returns every day. The man who builds himself a home in Ames does not make a mistake. The city is growing and is bound to show a big population gain during the next decade. Property values are advancing, and if all signs do

Continued from page 2

not fail, a Ames home may be bought or built much cheaper today than it can at any time in the future."

Leaders Parley Sheldon and Wallace Greeley financed major new buildings which dramatically altered downtown Ames. A joint venture between A. H. "Fred" Munn and Parley Sheldon, the Sheldon-Munn Hotel, constructed at the corner of Main and Kellogg, changed the focus of the business district from Main and Douglas to Main and Kellogg. Its size alone was enough to dominate the business district but the design, too, is noteworthy. Designed by the Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot and Bird, the architecture set the tone for much of the commercial construction to follow. The structural brick walls and the building's rectilinear shape was enhanced with contrasting brick framing around the 60 windows on Main Street.

A second major building constructed in 1915-16 was the new city hall at 5th and Kellogg. By now city government had outgrown the small, brick town hall of 1886. This building was demolished and a larger, up-to-date replacement was erected on the same site. Ames citizens were very proud of their modern facility. Designed by the well-known Des Moines firm of Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen in the Classical Revival style, it was constructed of Bedford limestone and Boone brick. Located within half-a-block of the new hotel, the new city hall complimented the hotel building and added to the increasing focus on the 5th and Kellogg corner. The building housed city gov-

ernment functions for 74 years.

A third large building, constructed on the corner of 5th and Douglas, was sponsored partly by Wallace Greeley. Designed by the same firm as the new city hall, the building's use of brick, geometric shapes and contrasting materials contributed to the changing architecture in downtown Ames. This was the home of the Masonic Temple, now occupied by The Octagon Center for the Arts.

Civic-minded Wallace Greeley was also busy with another project. On July 29, 1915, he announced plans to build a hospital for Ames at 12th and Douglas, a site which then offered sizeable space for expansion. Having lost two children in infancy, when Mary Greeley died in 1914, it was Captain Greeley's desire to see a hospital in Ames. The original hospital on 12th Street is still standing today. In September of 1916, a large crowd listened to the dedication address as Captain Greeley spoke, "It affords me great pleasure, more than words can express, that I contribute something towards the welfare of not only those now in need, but also for those who will be here long after we have passed away." Thus began the legacy of Mary Greeley Hospital

which continues to provide quality health care today, 77 years later.

A number of similarities between today and the 1915 time period are evident. Today residents are once again proud of their city hall building with the purchase and renovation of the former school building at 5th and Clark. In 1916, Professor H. R. O'Brien wrote, "today, more than ever before, the college is working, planning, dreaming of helping the State both today, and in the days and years to come," (section 2, p1.). In 1993 we see and hear of the University's efforts to assist the State in the area of economic development and technology transfer while providing a quality college education for those enrolled. While speaking highly of the Ames public school system of 1916, it is also noted that all the elementary schools are overcrowded. Recent additions provided for bulging enrollment but did not relieve crowded conditions. Additional teachers and more space needs were also being felt at the high school. This sounds very much like the school situation today.

Quite a number of business names familiar today appear in the 1916 Souvenir Edition. One of these is the H. L. Munn Lumber Co. which

is still operated by the Munn family at Main and Duff. The Munn name is one that many recognize as being among Ames' pioneer families. Some of the other businesses may not be recognized as having such long-term ties to the Ames business community. Others listed which still operate under the same or similar name include Nelson's Electric Shop, Carr Hardware, Ames Laundry, Coy



This photo of the Sheldon-Munn Hotel is dated 1919. The hotel was a social center for both the town and the college. For many years, its banquet rooms, main dining room and ballroom were in strong demand.



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Price \$655

NOW is the time you should have your car
looked-over. Don't wait until the season opens.

N. H. Jacobson, Ames, Ia.

*This ad was run in the 1916 Souvenir
Edition of the Ames Evening Times.
What a price for cars!*

Brothers (general contractors), Tallman's Jewelry (closed very recently), Ames Pantorium and Adams Furniture and Undertaking. For many years the funeral business was just one component of the Adams' business; today the funeral business and its related services comprise the entire business run by family descendants.

Many others listed have disappeared from the Ames community. Several sounded rather intriguing. How about lunch at the "Twin Owl" lunch room? Buying groceries at the "Pure Food Store" must have been a reassuring outing. In addition to buying your groceries, you could visit the bakery where they baked 800-1000 loaves of "Butter Krust" bread daily. Or you could stop at the Bates Baking Co. and buy the "famous Butternut Bread, rich as butter and sweet as a nut."

What would you expect to do at the "Ames Shining Parlor?" Ahhh, yes, of course—have your shoes shined! You could also get your hat cleaned and blocked there. A stop at the "Sanitary Bakery and

Restaurant" sounds inviting. They boast of being among the most up-to-date of bakeries and restaurants in this part of the State and serving one of the best 25 cent meals in Iowa. They had the largest bakery capacity in Ames at the time, employing four people year round. The shop was open from 5 a.m. until 8 p.m.

For the sweet tooth there were numerous bakeries and candy stores. Ice cream and soda fountains were common. The "Princess Candy Company" sold candy, fruit and ice cream. It would have been a treat to sample one of their fraternity or club sundaes. These special treats, very popular with the college crowd, were one-of-a-kind creations, a different sundae for each fraternity or sorority whether national or local to the Ames campus.

This time period was truly the forerunner of many parts of today's society. One of the most dominant components of our

lives today, the automobile, was just gaining general acceptance. In an article about the "Lincoln Way Garage" the author writes "This may well be called the automobile age. People who formerly laughed at the automobile owner and ridiculed his clumsy efforts to proceed along the road are now buying cars for themselves and appreciate the value for good service..." (section 1, p. 3).

Then, as now, Ames had high expectations of its citizenry. This article ends with a reprint from the personals section of the Feb. 11, 1916 edition.

Do Your Share

Do not be an idler nor a shirker. This world needs the efforts of every one. There is no reason why the burdens of life should be shouldered by a few. Unless you intend to do something that will make people think better of you there is no reason why you should inhabit this sphere.

Its A First!!!

The 1916 Municipal Building was recently designated as Ames' first local historic landmark. Located at the corner of 5th and Kellogg, the building was designed by one of the State's leading architectural firms, Liebbe, Nourse and Rasmussen of Des Moines. Its Classical Revival style expresses the midwestern idea of economical democratic government. This building housed elements of Ames' city government for 74 years.

The local landmark designation will aid greatly in the preservation of the building. The designation triggers a process of review and approval for any exterior changes to the building. Additionally, if the building's owners were interested in demolition, a review and approval process must be followed. Changes to the interior of the build-

ing are not affected by the landmark designation. Currently empty and owned by the City of Ames, the City Council will soon be seeking proposals for the reuse and restoration/ rehabilitation of the building.

The designation completes a Heritage Association project begun in 1990. Concerned about the building's future when it was vacated by the Ames city government, the Association began the lengthy local landmark designation process. Two Association members, Rose Rollenhagen and Kathy Svec, completed the necessary research and nomination papers and followed the process through numerous meetings. Congratulations, and thank you, to Rose and Kathy for a job well done.

Ames History By Mail



\$6.00

❖ Faces of Our Founders: The Early Leaders of Ames, Iowa

A 40 page book based on the materials gathered for Ames' 125th anniversary celebration exhibition. Featured are a detailed time line through 1916, 22 biographies of early leaders and 35 photographs of personalities, families and places.

This book may also be purchased at Travel Genie, University Bookstore, and Brunnier Museum Shop.

\$2.50

❖ Memories of a Commercial Traveler by Kendrick Brown

This 1971 issue of the Iowa Historical Society's Palimsest features the collected columns of K.W. Brown, Ames' first grocer in 1866. When he later became a salesman and traveled the state, he sent home his written observations for the weekly paper. Enjoy his views of early Ames and Iowa.

K.W. Brown was Farwell Brown's grandfather.

\$1.00

❖ 1990 Ames Historical Calendar

\$2.00

❖ 1992 Ames Historical Calendar

Twelve collectable pictures in each calendar, with descriptive captions. Measures 8 1/2" x 11".

To be
announced

❖ Coming in 1993, Farwell Brown's book of collected Ames stories, including numerous photographs.

All proceeds from these sales go to support the Ames Heritage Association's Bauge Log Home restoration project, and other programs.

Send to: Ames Heritage Association, Box 821, Ames, Iowa 50010

of copies

Faces of Our Founders @ \$6.00 plus \$.75 postage

Memories of A Commercial Traveler @ \$2.50 plus \$1.00 postage

1990 Ames Historical Calendar @ \$1.00 plus \$1.00 postage

1992 Ames Historical Calendar @ \$2.00 plus \$1.00 postage

Yes, add me to the list of those interested in information about Farwell Brown's book.

Name _____

Address _____

Please send information about becoming a member of the Ames Heritage Association.

Who is that in the Window?

by Kathy Svec

Heads are turning among passersby of the City Hall Council Chambers. In view from the hallway are enlargements of the 1917-18 caricatures of local businessmen, part of the newest display put up by Kathy Svec and Sharon Wirth of the Association's Board. The Heritage Association has received permission to use the display cases along the east wall of the second floor Council Chambers for history-related displays. The caricatures, which originally appeared in issues of the 1917 and 1918 *Ames Evening Times*, have been enlarged and mounted and are on view with stories about each man's business and two- and three-dimensional advertising memorabilia. The

stories about the businesses have been taken from the special edition of the paper that was published in February, 1916, to review the status of the city at the time the City Hall at 5th and Kellogg opened. The artifacts have been generously loaned by Don Faas of Ames and are a great variety of imprinted objects specific to the businesses on display. Original newspaper clippings of the caricatures were donated to the Association by Ames resident Con Wendell.

When you are in City Hall, we encourage you to view this entertaining display. Additionally, caricatures of the city clerk, city attorney and city engineer of the time are on display in the respective offices.

Grant Received

The Association has received an Ames Community Arts Council grant for a project with a two-part goal. The \$350 grant will be matched by the Ames Heritage Association to help market our recently published book "Faces of our Founders" and other historic materials, as well as to launch a large scale membership drive. The Board hopes that with increased book sales and memberships, the Association will be in a better position to move ahead on a number of projects including the Bauge Log Home restoration. The grant, which is funded through the Ames Commission on the Arts with local option tax monies, will provide important support. Special thanks go to the Arts Council!

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The Ames Heritage Association meets the third Monday of every month (September through June) at 7:00 p.m. at Willson-Beardshear School, 920 Carroll, Ames.

The annual membership meeting is held the third Monday of March. Time and place are announced in advance.

The Ames Intelligencer is published three times a year-winter, spring, and fall.

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